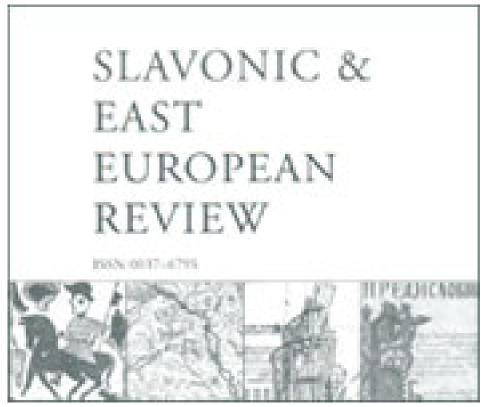


Dalmatian Ragusa and the Norman Kingdom of Sicily

Author(s): David Abulafia

Source: *The Slavonic and East European Review*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (Jul., 1976), pp. 412-428
Published by: the Modern Humanities Research Association and University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies
Stable URL: http://www.jstor.org/stable/4207301
Accessed: 16/06/2014 07:08

SEER, Vol. LIV, No. 3, July 1976

Dalmatian Ragusa and the Norman Kingdom of Sicily

DAVID ABULAFIA

THE port of Ragusa, or Dubrovnik, was one among many small towns in the Adriatic that built part of its wealth during the twelfth century on commercial ties with Apulia and Sicily; far from being the rival of Pisa or Venice—with both of which Ragusa enjoyed trade relations—the town fell repeatedly under Venetian domination. Indeed, it is partly the modesty of Ragusan commercial activity at this period that is of such interest. While it cannot be proved that Ragusa was an especially important commercial centre during the twelfth century, the town is saved from oblivion by the existence of a wealth of early documentation, illustrating in detail the commercial and political relations of Ragusa with its Italian or Slav neighbours.[1] The survival of this material is perhaps a tribute to Dubrovnik's commercial greatness in later centuries, during which the commune took care to preserve its archives,[2] and during which Ragusan historians anxiously searched for past proofs of the town's liberties, be these liberties political or fiscal.[3] All this is in great contrast to Dalmatian neighbours who fared less well, such as Cattaro just down the coast from Ragusa. That Cattaro traded extensively with Norman Italy and Sicily is clear from a privilege of the Empress Constance issued in 1195, in which she exempted its citizens from the

David Abulafia is a Fellow of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge.

[1] Reference will be made to the following collections of printed sources by the names of their editor: J. Kukuljević, *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, Zagreb, 1874–5; S. Ljubić, *Listine o odnasajih juznoga Slaventsva i mletačke republike*, I, Zagreb, 1868; J. Radonić, *Acta et diplomata ragusina*, I, Belgrade, 1934; T. Smičiklas, *Codex diplomaticus regni Croatiae, Dalmatiae et Slavoniae*, II and III, Zagreb, 1904–5.

[2] I have examined the documents in the Historički Arhiv, Dubrovnik, which date from the period of Norman rule or which relate to trade with the Norman *Regno*; I am grateful to Dr Zdravko Šundriča, Archivist at Dubrovnik, for his co-operation. All the documents examined belong to the series Acta Sanctae Mariae Majoris (hereafter called ASMM).

[3] In particular, see Giunio Resti (Junio Restić), *Chronica Ragusina*, ed. S. Nodilo, Zagreb, 1893 (hereafter called Restić). Restić died in 1735 (Nodilo's edition, p. vi). Also of value is Giacomo di Luccari (Luccarević), *Copioso ristretto de gli annali di Ragusa*, Venice, 1605. Cf. also *Annales Ragusini anonymi item Nicolai de Ragnina*, ed. S. Nodilo, Zagreb, 1883; and Mauro Orbini, *Il Regno de gli Slavi*, Pesaro, 1601. The modern work by F. W. Carter, *Dubrovnik (Ragusa): A Classic City-State*, London, 1972, is rather unsatisfactory. What he has to say on the Norman and adjacent periods can be read elsewhere—on the economic side, in his article 'Dubrovnik: the early development of a pre-industrial city' (*Slavonic and East European Review*, XLVII, no. 109, London, 1969, pp. 354–68); for the political side in L. Villari's *The Republic of Ragusa*, London, 1904, from which Carter has drawn extensively. Carter's references to commerce with southern Italy in his article (p. 365) are inadequately annotated, and these faults are carried over into his book.

payment of certain commercial taxes;[4] and Traù (Trogir), Spalato (Split) as well as Durazzo (Durrës) probably also traded with the Apulian towns on a substantial scale—yet from none of these towns is there any surviving evidence of commercial treaties.[5]

What can be said for Dubrovnik can, therefore, very likely be said for its neighbours as well in major or minor degree. But a second area in which Dubrovnik impinges on the history of Norman Sicily is in Ragusan acknowledgment of Norman suzerainty, following the rejection of Byzantine overlordship. As a further complication, rivalry between Venice and Sicily over control of Ragusa may be detected in the Venetian-Sicilian treaty of 1175, where William II of Sicily promised: 'nos non invademus auferre terras que sunt de tenimento ducis Venetie et Veneticorum scilicet a Ragusia usque Venetiam'[6]—a highly optimistic description of the Venetian land empire in Dalmatia. Thus Ragusa was dragged into the contest of Normans, Venetians and Byzantines for control of the Adriatic exit.

I

Most of the commercial treaties between Dubrovnik and the south Italian towns belong to the early thirteenth century, and those that concern Apulian towns were drawn up when abuse of royal rights inherited by Frederick II from the Norman kings was rife.[7] Nevertheless, there are no signs that the citizens of Ragusa attempted to appropriate rights that were not theirs. Certainly they complained to the communal authorities in the Apulian towns that their old rights were being denied them; but this merely prompted the Apulians to check their memories, or their records, and to uphold Ragusan claims. Restić appears to state that the communal authorities at Bisceglie searched out their copies of ancient treaties with Ragusa before confirming the merchants of Ragusa in their rights (1211),[8] although the document of confirmation drawn up at Bisceglie refers instead to the verbal testimony of a jury of Apulian veterans.[9] By 1208 the men of Ragusa had lost their copy of a treaty

[4] G. N. Nitto de Rossi and F. Nitti di Vito, eds., *Codice diplomatico barese, le pergamene del duomo di Bari*, I, Bari, 1897, pp. 127–8, section 65.

[5] But there were Amalfitan settlers at Durazzo in the late eleventh century, as Anna Comnena remarked in the *Alexiad*, VI, 1, 1.

[6] Archivio di Stato, Venice, Liber Pactorum, I, f. 86v and f. 78v, and Liber Blancus, f. 272v. Printed from the inferior Blancus text in G. L. F. Tafel and G. M. Thomas, *Urkunden zur älteren Handels- und Staatsgeschichte der Republik Venedig*, Vienna, 1856, I, p. 172. Extract in Ljubić, p. 11.

[7] Abuse by the Genoese and Pisans of such rights is discussed in D. S. H. Abulafia, 'Henry Count of Malta and his Mediterranean Activities, 1203–1230' (*Medieval Malta: Studies on Malta before the Knights*, ed. A. T. Luttrell, Supplementary Monograph of the British School at Rome, London, 1975, pp. 104–25).

[8] Restić, p. 75.

[9] Radonić, pp. 18–20; Smičiklas, III, p. 107–9.

with Molfetta, drawn up sixty years earlier, and asked the Molfettans to confirm its terms. If the bishop and citizens of Molfetta had lost their own copy, they did not admit it: 'et quia Ragusii privilegium a predicto domino comite inveniri non potuit, sicut nobis per litteras significaverunt quaerentes, ut exemplar privilegii distincte mitteremus . . ..[10] Nevertheless, here was fertile ground for forgery and deception. The list of treaties and agreements from the twelfth and early thirteenth centuries is long and widely-ranging:

Molfetta, 1148 (cited in document of 1208);
Pisa, 1169, May 13;
Ravenna, 1188, 21 November;
Fano, 1199, July 11;
Ancona, 1199, August 25;
Monopoli, 1201, February 1;
Bari, 1201, February 8;
Termoli, 1203, May 29;
Molfetta, 1208, May (renewal);
Bisceglie, 1211, June 6.

On examination all (except of course the 1148 *perditum*) appear to be original texts, not later copies, issued when and as stated, and inscribed on rather sorry-looking scraps of parchment in reasonably respectable or legible hands.[11]

In 1148 Ragusa and Molfetta arranged a mutual exemption from taxes payable in each other's port.[12] By contrast with Molfetta, no list of Ragusan taxes is provided, leading to the suspicion that they were less elaborate than those of the towns of Norman Italy—which, in turn, are impossible properly to describe, in view of the bewildering variety of names and functions that show few signs of consistency. In Molfetta Ragusans were to be free of 'plazam vel scalaticum et familiam vel ancoraticum', by which is probably meant taxes on disembarking and payments due for sheltering the ship in harbour. The reason expressed for this treaty is 'the mutual choice and the closeness of blood' between Ragusa and Molfetta, a perplexing phrase, even though Dubrovnik was not yet a Slav city through and through. Slavonic names appear in quantity in Ragusan documents, and by the late twelfth century the Slavonic name for the city was in current use.[13] The Latin element in the town is more elusive, though

[10] Radonić, pp. 17–18; Smičiklas, III, pp. 75–6. Cf. ibid., II, p. 62, mistakenly suggesting that an original of the 1148 text survives at Dubrovnik (or Vienna, the location of the documents when Smičiklas was at work).

[11] Dubrovnik, Historički Arhiv, ASMM.

[12] See note 10.

[13] As evinced in Smičiklas, III, p. 237 (29 August 1189), line 4: *Dubrovchane* (in Cyrillic script).

the Dalmatian church was partially staffed by south Italians.[14] They, however, can have made little contribution to blood ties, or too little and too secret a contribution to deserve formal acknowledgment.

One copy of this document was deposited in Ragusa—which, as has been seen, lost it and asked for its confirmation—and one copy was kept in Molfetta. The text was licensed by 'our lord the count Robert of Conversano'; this is Robert of Conversano or Loritello who was a familiar of Roger II, but who fell out of favour at court after the accession of William I and the appointment to high office of the Apulian bureaucrat Maio of Bari, against whom he eventually rebelled. As lord of Molfetta he may have profited from harbour dues, and thus have been directly interested in the agreement with Ragusa.[15]

The earliest document to survive in its original is a treaty of 1169 between Ragusa and Pisa (accompanied the same year by a treaty between Split and Pisa).[16] Ragusans are promised protection in Pisan territory, both in Tuscany and at Constantinople in the Pisan colony there. No commercial privileges are specified by the Pisan ambassadors, but it is interesting to find that the Pisans found it worthwhile to send a mission to Ragusa; this, accompanied by their agreement with the count of Split, speaks of a Pisan initiative in the Adriatic, to back up growing financial interests at Constantinople. Unfortunately, the text offers no secure proof that Pisans visited Ragusa in any quantity, nor even that Ragusans visited Pisa; and no Pisan commercial contracts survive from the twelfth century to illuminate the effects of the agreement. At this stage Ragusa still owed its allegiance to Constantinople, and the Pisan treaty must be seen in the context of Pisan attempts to inherit in the Greek empire rights enjoyed until lately by the Venetians, who, for their part, moved into close commercial and political ties with Norman Sicily.[17]

Another treaty between Ragusa and an Italian town to the north of the *Regno* demands attention, for palaeographic and diplo-

[14] See note 60.

[15] For the documents of this count, see A. Petrucci, 'Note di diplomatica normanna, i documenti di Roberto di "Bassunvilla" conte di Conversano e conte di Loritello' (*Bulletino dell'Istituto storico italiano per il Medio Evo*, LXXI, Rome, 1959, pp. 113–40). Petrucci omits any notice of the Ragusa text, but includes many other Molfettan charters. Cf. F. Carabellese, ed., *Codice diplomatico barese*, VII, *Le Carte di Molfetta*, Bari, 1912.

[16] Kukuljević, II, pp. 84–5; Ljubić, p. 10; Radonić, pp. 5–6; Smičiklas, II, pp. 124–5. The agreement between Pisa and Split is known from the Ragusan text.

[17] Pisa recovered favour at the court of the Basileus as Venetian diplomatic activity became centred on the Norman kingdom of Sicily. In 1170 the Pisans re-established their trading colony at Constantinople, this time just outside the city itself; and in 1171, with the expulsion of the Venetians from Constantinople, their commercial position was automatically enhanced. See C. M. Brand, *Byzantium Confronts the West, 1180–1204*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1968, p. 207.

matic reasons. The treaty with Fano[18] expressly recalls the long-standing friendship between Ragusa and Fano, so its date of 1199 must not be taken to indicate the first stage in the establishment of good relations. Once again, the concern is for the protection of Ragusans visiting Fano, rather than with detailed tax rights. The document is of interest in this context for its description of Ragusa as 'Ragusie seu Siracusane civitatis'. Kukuljević wondered whether this was not an innocent confusion by the citizens of Fano with Ragusa in south-eastern Sicily;[19] on the surface this might appear reasonable, since Ragusa was an agrarian and industrial centre of medium importance in Norman Sicily.[20] But it was not a maritime port; its citizens were mostly Muslim or Greek and, though near Syracuse, it had no obvious reason to be confused with Syracuse. And, above all, the surviving copy of the document, though drawn up in Fano, is preserved in Dalmatian, not Sicilian, Ragusa. Clearly *Siracusa* must be taken to be a scribal or verbal distortion of *Racusa*, *Ragusa*, perhaps a sign of literary affectation, if anybody remembered ancient Issa, founded by Syracusan Greeks on the Dalmatian coast fifteen centuries earlier.[21] At any rate, the document itself appears above suspicion as a forgery. It is clearly written in a contemporary hand. All that needs to be rejected is its connection with the Sicilian *Regno*.

Not that the Ragusans neglected their interests in southern Italy. On 1 February 1201 Bishop Pagano of Monopoli replied to a request from Count Dobrolo of Ragusa, assuring him that Ragusans could visit Monopoli free of fear of molestation or of seizure of goods and persons.[22] The initiative had apparently come from Dobrolo and his named emissary Michatius 'vestre civitatis vicarium',[23] but the great warmth of the Apulian response suggests that commercial ties with Ragusa were already very close. There is no reason to suppose that this was the first treaty of mutual protection between the two towns, but the return of Ragusa to Byzantine suzerainty in the 1190s may have prompted a review of Ragusan overseas relations. This is suggested by the fact that a week later, on 8 February 1201, the justiciar and other officials of the city of Bari swore on the gospels to observe and to enforce a twelve-year peace with Ragusa, protecting the men

[18] Kukuljević, pp. 207–8; Radonić, pp. 12–13; Smičiklas, II, pp. 321–2.

[19] Kukuljević, II, p. 208.

[20] Cf. the remarks of Roger II's Muslim geographer al-Idrisi in M. Amari and L. Schiaparelli, ed. and tr., *L'Italia descritta nel 'Libro del Re Ruggero' compilato da Edrisi*, Rome, 1883, pp. 35, 53: 'ai mercati di Ragusa tragga gente da tutti i paesi e da tutte le regioni'.

[21] Tragurion (Traù, Trogir) was an offshoot of Issa; but Ragusa had no connection with ancient Syracuse.

[22] Radonić, pp. 14–15; Smičiklas, III, p. 1.

[23] Restić, p. 69, gives him a Ragusan pedigree: he is 'Mihaccio Gondola', on what grounds it is impossible to say.

and goods of Ragusa from 'omnibus vasselis Apulorum cursalium', that is, Apulian pirates who use the territory of Bari to attack the Ragusans.[24] The problem of piracy provides a second dimension to these two treaties. South Italian pirates such as Giovanni Steirione paraded in Byzantine waters and the Genoese corsair Leone Vetrano installed himself at Corfu, until winkled out by a Venetian war fleet.[25] Meanwhile the merchants of the Adriatic had a strong common interest in protecting their sea-lanes. Very likely Michatius, the Ragusan emissary sent to Monopoli, was instructed to visit Bari and other towns at the same time—hence the closeness in date between the two documents—but no mention of him occurs in the Bari text, which takes the form of a judicial oath and is less expansive than the Bishop of Monopoli's letter to the Ragusans.

Two years after this the port of Termoli, in the Abruzzi, expressed the desire 'fraternitatem veram et amicitiam inviolatam cum Raguseis semper communicare et manutenere', promising protection to Ragusan visitors and exemption from the 'plateaticum universum et arboraticum' in Termoli, that is, from all market and trade taxes.[26] Both Termoli and Dubrovnik stood on the edge of a mountainous interior, through which access could be gained with difficulty to flourishing markets on opposite coasts—the Campanian towns and Rome on the one hand, Thrace and Constantinople on the other. Termoli's hinterland could provide grain and oil in exchange for Dubrovnik's pelts, slaves and, above all, silver; and Italian timber would help to compensate for the comparative barrenness of the Dalmatian coast if Ragusa constructed her own ships.

The treaty of 1208 between the bishop and citizens of Molfetta and the men of Ragusa has already been mentioned. 'It has served us for sixty years', the Molfettans declared, 'and may it serve us in the future too'.[27]

But good relations were not always so easy, as a sailor from Ragusa discovered at Bisceglie in 1211. Vita of Ragusa came before the royal judges, bringing a law suit against the soldier Maio, the notary Johannocarro, Petrecca Jeronimi, Angelo Barono and Ursone Grun de Zapte, citizens of Bari; he pleaded that they had unjustly demanded of him 'anchoraticum, arboraticum and plateaticum', the standard harbour and merchant taxes.[28] His case was that *ex antiquo* citizens of Ragusa who arrived at Bisceglie had paid

[24] Ljubić, p. 20; Radonić, pp. 15–16; Smičiklas, III, p. 1–2.
[25] See Abulafia, 'Henry Count of Malta', pp. 105, 115; and J. Herrin, 'The Collapse of the Byzantine Empire in the 12th century: A Study of a Medieval Economy' (*University of Birmingham Historical Journal*, XII, Birmingham, 1970, p. 202).
[26] Ljubić, pp. 20–1; Radonić, pp. 16–17; Smičiklas, III, pp. 29–30.
[27] Ljubić, pp. 26–7; Radonić, pp. 17–18; Smičiklas, III, pp. 75–6.
[28] Ljubić, pp. 27–8; Radonić, pp. 18–20; Smičiklas, III, pp. 107–8; cf. Restić, p. 75.

nothing for *anchoraticum*, *arboraticum* nor the sale and purchase of goods. And, he said, it was just the same for Bisceglians at Dubrovnik. The judges therefore instituted an inquiry, consulting the old men of their town ('illis concivibus nostris quorum . . . grandevitate'). They said ('Qui d . . .'; MS defective) that they had often gone to Ragusa, without ever paying for 'anchoratico, arboratico aut mercimoniis ibi emptis vel distractis'. Moreover, there was the helpful testimony of some Baresi who had only lately returned from Ragusa. So the judges concluded that a good and ancient custom did indeed exist, and that it should remain in force. Of great interest is the fact that no documents were produced in evidence, nor even mentioned. Moreover, no treaty was apparently deposited at Dubrovnik after the judgment had been passed. The judgment itself carried full legal and diplomatic weight; it was a statement of existing fact, of 'bonos usus et consuetudines', and no more words were necessary to enforce its terms. The indication that no formal treaty ever existed between the two towns is fully in accord with a picture known from confirmations of unwritten 'usus et consuetudines' elsewhere in the Mediterranean, such as the confirmations included within Sicilian privileges for Genoese and Venetian merchants.[29] There is all the more reason to think that the accords between Ragusa and south Italian towns other than Bisceglie were put into writing long after intimate ties had developed. It is an impressive thought that the Bisceglie document, and probably some of its contemporaries, are not merely the oldest texts to survive in Dubrovnik, but are probably the absolute beginning of the record—the earliest documents ever actually compiled.

It is worth considering whether the facts that all the pacts analysed here (except the Pisan) were drawn up not at Dubrovnik but in the territory of the other contracting party has any significance. This fact seems to indicate that during the last years of the twelfth and the first years of the thirteenth century Ragusa made a concerted effort to improve, or at least maintain, its diplomatic and commercial relations with other Adriatic communes. Of them, only Fano was in any way dependent on Venice, under the terms of a treaty of 1141 which committed Fano to supply a galley when Venice was at war anywhere 'a Ragusio usque in Ravenam'.[30] Ancona was a flourishing mercantile centre in its own right; the Apulian towns owed allegiance, as their documents state, to the King of Sicily and to his

[29] Thus William II of Sicily confirmed the *usus et consuetudines* of Genoese merchants at Salerno, which are not stated to have taken written form: C. Imperiale di Sant'Angelo, ed., *Codice diplomatico della Repubblica di Genova, Fonti per la Storia d'Italia*, Rome, 1936–42, I, p. 340. Compare William II's privilege for Venice, cited in note 6.

[30] Archivio di Stato, Venice, Liber Pactorum, I, f. 187v–188r, (1 March 1141); extract printed by Ljubić, p. 6.

vassals. And the intensity of Ragusan ties with the Apulian towns was demonstrated at the same period by the submission of the commune of Ragusa to the line of Norman kings of Sicily.[31]

II

Not once but repeatedly was the commune of Ragusa drawn into the state established by the Normans in southern Italy and Sicily. On the first occasion, in the late eleventh century, it was the growing interest of the Normans established in Apulia in the affairs of Dalmatia and the Byzantine empire that led Ragusa and its neighbours to seek Guiscard's overlordship. The first phase of this submission dates to about 1075 when Amico of Giovinazzo fought on behalf of Pope Gregory VII and the Croatian Church against the Croatian king, and secured the allegiance of at least part of the Dalmatian coast.[32] The attitude of Ragusa, nominally obedient to Constantinople rather than Croatia, is unclear; but when six years later Guiscard attacked Durazzo, Ragusan ships were present on his side, ranged against the Greeks and the Venetians.[33] Fear of Venice was doubtless a potent factor in the decision of the Ragusans to back Robert Guiscard, particularly since Venice had organized resistance to Amico of Giovinazzo and had thereby gained the allegiance of the north Dalmatian coast. In the 1080s the Ragusans were not so much renouncing their Byzantine sovereign, as renouncing that sovereign's current ally and its dreams of commercial monopoly or supremacy; and in Apulia they found a potent master who could protect the town, as the Komnenoi could not, from Venetian or Croatian pretensions.

The second known occasion when Ragusa took Norman protection occurred when the same forces, Sicily, Venice and Byzantium were differently aligned. In 1171 the Venetians were expelled from Constantinople; and one reason for this—quite apart from their overweening control of Greek trade with the west—was that Venice and Sicily were entering a period of friendly relations;[34] King

[31] For the Ancona treaty, see Kukuljević, II, p. 209; Radonić, pp. 13–14; Smičiklas, II, pp. 325–6.

[32] F. Rački, ed., *Documenta historiae chroaticae periodum antiquam illustrantia*, Zagreb, 1877, pp. 99, 101–2, 455–7; M. Spremić, 'La Repubblica di Ragusa e il Regno di Sicilia' (*Atti del Congresso internazionale di studi sulla Sicilia normanna*, Palermo, 1973, p. 301); this article was also printed in *Archivio storico per la Sicilia orientale*, LXIX, Catania, 1973. Most recently, see D. Mandić, 'Gregorio VII e l'occupazione veneta della Dalmazia nell'anno 1076' in *Venezia e il Levante fino al secolo XV*, ed. A. Pertusi, Florence–Venice, 1973, I, *Storia–diritto–economia*, pp. 453–71.

[33] Luccari, op. cit., p. 13. That the Ragusans traded through Durazzo is apparent from the Byzantine chrysobull of 1192 in favour of Ragusa—see below.

[34] Andrea Dandolo, *Cronica*, ed. E. Pastorello in *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, 2nd series, XII, part I, p. 249. A fuller discussion is to be included in my forthcoming book, *The Two Italies: Economic Relations between the Norman Kingdom of Sicily and the Northern Communes*, Cambridge, 1976.

William and the Doge were jointly financing opposition in Italy to Frederick Barbarossa. Ragusa's allegiance to the Byzantine emperor exposed the town to new threats: Ragusa could no longer choose between one alliance and another, but must hope to draw the best out of the only alliance available, an abandonment of Constantinople for the Italian colleagues. In 1171 a Venetian fleet on the way to Byzantine territory appears to have attacked Ragusa, no doubt as a first manoeuvre against the Greek empire; but according to the Ragusan historian Junio Restić the Venetians failed to capture the town.[35] Venetian sources said the opposite, that the Doge's fleet seized Ragusa, but that Ragusa refused to stay under Venetian control so that it had to be stormed a second time, on the return of the Venetian fleet from the Aegean.[36] After that Ragusa once again renounced Venetian suzerainty. Restić's patriotic disavowal of the Venetian version would be highly suspect, did he not offer an alternative explanation of events that stands critical examination:

> Instead I find another argument against the assertion of the Venetian writers, who wrote with that faith that can be expected from the incautious, while authentic documents exist: that the Ragusans withdrew themselves from the protection of the Greek empire and placed themselves at that time under the protection of William, king of Sicily. And I imagine the cause of this change was solely to guarantee protection from Venetian vexation, with the protection of the said prince, for the Venetians were continually at war with the Greek empire, and as a result of their action the Ragusans were not considered by the Venetians to be dependents of that empire, but to depend on the kings of Sicily, with whom Venice at that time cultivated good relations.[37]

All this makes excellent sense. Ragusa was a legitimate target for the Venetians only so long as it was a Byzantine town; by changing to Sicilian allegiance, the Ragusans ingeniously held off the Venetians. No doubt the Venetians coveted Ragusa more for its commercial activity than for its Greek connections, but in 1171 the Doge himself commanded the Venetian fleet, and once Ragusa had declared for Sicily he could hardly have led an attack on the town. Venice would have to content itself with the severance of Ragusan political ties with Constantinople, in the knowledge that this act of severance brought the Rialto no gain, either territorial or commercial. Even so the story could be dismissed as fable, did not Restić report, else-

[35] Restić, pp. 57–8.

[36] *Historia Ducum Veneticorum: Monumenta Germaniae Historica: Scriptores*, XIV, p. 79; cf. also *Chronicon Altinate*, ed. A. Rossi, *Archivio storico italiano*, ser. I, VIII, Florence, 1845, commentario, p. 143, which summarizes the *Historia Ducum* and is taken, utterly wrongly, to be the *Chronicon Altinate* by Villari, pp. 40, 43; the text he cites is, in fact, a commentary on the *Chronicon* derived from other contemporary sources.

[37] Restić, p. 58.

where in his work, the existence of a privilege of King William II of Sicily:

> At Ragusa there is to be found today the instrument, made in 1172, which states: this republic has placed itself under the protection of William, king of Sicily, and this prince has promised to protect her and defend her against all comers. And with this document are cast to the ground assertions both of rebellion against the Greeks, then rivals of William, and of the conquest of the city.[38]

Promises by the Sicilian kings of protection of goods and persons from overseas towns are not unusual; but, to judge from Restić, the document he saw placed Ragusa under the political authority of the Sicilian crown and offered promises of naval help in an emergency. Certainly in the late 1180s and early 1190s this political authority was based on deeper foundations than nebulous promises of protection; there is nothing inherently improbable about the document Restić describes.

Two serious difficulties emerge nevertheless. In the first place, he reports a document of 1172, when the Venetian attacks occurred in 1171. This could mean simply that the Ragusans suffered two Venetian raids before resolving their difficulties with an appeal to Sicily—so Krekić seems to argue.[39] Or initial gestures made in 1171 may not have received documentary form until 1172, owing to delays in contact or, indeed, to lack of urgency once Ragusa had sworn submission. Finally, it is possible that Restić himself was in error, for he was well aware that the Venetian attacks occurred traditionally in 1171, though he dated the document a year later. The second serious difficulty is that the privilege Restić describes no longer survives.[40] He refers to several acts that do survive—such as the Bisceglie agreement—and he cannot easily be accused of inventing the 1172 charter. It is true that his interpretation of the Ragusan documents often appears slapdash, as when he describes the Bisceglians searching out copies of old treaties, rather than merely consulting the memories of their senior citizens.[41] But to accuse him of dishonesty, as opposed to misplaced patriotism, may be going too far. In any case, the Dubrovnik Historical Archive has moved several times in the last century, as far as Vienna, so that it is easy to imagine this charter went astray some time in the last two hundred years.[42]

[38] ibid., p. 8.

[39] B. Krekić, *Dubrovnik (Raguse) et le Levant au Moyen Âge*, Paris–The Hague, 1961, pp. 20–1.

[40] Or at least, it does not appear to be mentioned in catalogues at the Historički Arhiv, nor traceable among the muniments there.

[41] Restić, p. 75.

[42] Professor Heinrich Schmidinger of the Österreichisches Kulturinstitut, Rome, informs me that he once found in Vienna a charter that should have correctly been sent to Yugoslavia after the First World War.

A voluntary union of Ragusa with the *Regno* makes all the more sense in the light of subsequent developments. Spremić has argued that in 1172 or soon afterwards, Ragusa voluntarily withdrew from Sicilian overlordship, as the Venetian threat receded.[43] But Spremić is wrong to suggest that what made this possible was the restoration of good relations between Byzantium and Venice, with the result that Norman protection became less urgent or convenient. Following the confiscation of Venetian property in his empire by Manuel Komnenos, the Sicilians were able to draw the Doge into an ever closer alliance, expressed first of all in the Sicilian-Venetian treaty of 1175 and then in Sicilian co-operation at the Peace of Venice in 1177.[44] For the moment the Venetians had to regard Constantinople as a lost cause. Quite apart from the false premise on which Spremić has based his argument, there is the lack of evidence that Ragusa ever left Sicilian overlordship in the 1170s. There is simply no mention of the Sicilian *Regno* in Ragusan documents or chronicles from 1172 to 1186. Nevertheless, Venetian influence at Ragusa clearly increased—whether in agreement with King William or out of rivalry with him cannot be said. The treaty of 1175 did refer to Ragusa, as has been seen, and implies that it stood just within or just without the Venetian-controlled parts of Dalmatia.[45] And in 1182 the Venetians do not seem seriously to have regarded Ragusa as part of the Byzantine empire. In August of that year we find two members of the Tiepolo family of Venice making a contract of *colleganςia* worth £60.[46] Giovanni Tiepolo agrees to travel on behalf of the investors, his father Pietro (£20) and Marco Tiepolo (£40), to Ragusa, 'and then to wherever the ship's company shall agree, except to places forbidden of access by the Doge our Lord and his Council', which, at that moment, must have meant Byzantium above all. This does suggest that Spremić has exceeded the limits of the evidence; either Sicily or Venice probably controlled Ragusa in the ten years after 1172—nor is it impossible that a Sicilian–Venetian condominium operated there. For in 1207 the Ragusans made a pact with the men of Cattaro, promising military aid in the event of a siege of

[43] Spremić, op. cit., p. 304: 'Ragusa stessa se ne liberò'.

[44] For the treaty of 1175, see note 6. For the Peace of Venice, see Romuald of Salerno, *Chronicon*, ed. C. A. Garufi, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, 2nd series, VII, part I, pp. 279–81. Romuald was William of Sicily's emissary to the peace conference of Pope, German emperor, Doge and Normans.

[45] Ragusa could have been regarded as beyond Venetian limits, if the analogy of the Venetian pact with Pola in Istria carries any weight. In 1145 Pola promised to supply Venice with a galley if the latter were at war 'a Ragusio usque Venetie et exinde usque Anconam'—Archivio di Stato, Venice, Codice Diplomatico Lanfranchi, s.a. 1145 December; similarly for Giustinopoli, ibid., s.a. 1145 December; for Fano see note 30. The limits in these cases appear to have been set without any implication that Venetian dominion extends as far as Ancona itself.

[46] A. Lombardo and R. Morozzo della Rocca, eds., *Documenti del Commercio veneziano nei secoli XI–XIII*, I, Rome–Turin, 1940, pp. 330–1.

Cattaro, 'a riserva se l'assedio di Cattaro fosse posto dal doge di Venezia, o dal re di Sicilia, con i quali i Ragusei avevano particolar impegno'.[47] By 1207 Ragusa had acknowledged Venetian suzerainty[48] so that mention of the king of Sicily adds mystery. There is no reason, as shall be seen, why some of the Ragusan nobility, at least, should not have been vassals of the Sicilian Crown, whatever the overall leaning of the commune.

In 1185 the Sicilian army and navy attacked the Byzantine empire, seizing Thessalonika and sailing under the walls of Constantinople itself. Durazzo fell into Norman hands at the very start of the expedition.[49] Not surprisingly, Ragusa appears the next year securely under Sicilian tutelage, whether out of voluntary submission, or out of coercion, or because the agreement of 1171/2 remained fully in force. Evidence is provided by a treaty between Ragusa and the Grand Župan Stefan Nemanja, builder of an extensive Serbian kingdom in the hills behind Ragusa.[50] The treaty admits to a long history of Serbian molestation of Ragusan men, animals and shipping. Henceforth the Ragusans were to be free to trade, to pasture their beasts and to cut wood in anciently disputed territory. The treaty was drawn up in September of 1186 at Ragusa, 'in curia domini gloriosissimi regis W et domini Tribuni archiepiscopi in presentia et Tasiligardi regis camerarii ac Gervasii comitis cunctorumque nobilium et populi universi.' Later it is stated that it was the 'archbishop, chamberlain and count with the nobles and the people' who sanctioned the peace treaty. According to Restić, the Ragusans had good reason to make peace with Stefan Nemanja, for he was at war with Constantinople, where the Ragusans too were out of favour, 'per aver lasciato la sua protezione e presa quella come si disse, di Gulielmo, re di Sicilia'.[51]

The treaty of 1186 is the first in a series dating from the countship of Gervasio. Seen in context, certain conclusions can be drawn from this treaty about the relations between Ragusa and the Norman kingdom. Counts and rectors existed at Ragusa in the thirteenth century, under Venetian domination; and in 1192 a Byzantine count

[47] Restić, p. 75.

[48] Krekić, op. cit., p. 24: more exactly, in 1205, by spontaneous recognition of Venetian suzerainty.

[49] For the Sicilo-Byzantine war of 1185, see the eye-witness account of Archbishop Eustathios of Thessalonika, *La Espugnazione di Tessalonica*, ed. S. P. Kyriakidis and V. Rotolo, Palermo, 1961; also German translation by H. Hunger, *Die Normannen in Thessalonike*, Graz, 1955. A lively account in Brand, op. cit., pp. 160–75.

[50] Ljubić, p. 66; Kukuljević, II, pp. 137–8; Radonić, pp. 7–9; Smičiklas, II, pp. 201–2. See also V. Foretić, 'Ugovor Dubrovnika sa srpskim velikim Županom Stefanom Nemanjom i stara Dubrovačka djedina', *Rad Jugoslavenske Akademije Znanosti i Umjetnosti*, CCLXXXIII, Belgrade, 1951, pp. 51–118, a close study of the Serbian connotations of this text. Two contemporary copies of this treaty survive in the Dubrovnik archive.

[51] Restić, p. 64.

or rector was appointed by Isaac Angelos, and described in a seventeenth-century paraphrase of Isaac's chrysobull as a *presidente*, 'il quale dovesse custodire i castelli e giudicare in compagnia dei consoli della repubblica.'[52] Presuming a general identity between the *presidente* and the count, Gervasio can be seen as a representative of sovereign power, acting jointly with other officers, rather than as lord of the town as such.

Further light is shed by some documents drawn up on St Blaise's day, 1190 (3 February, the feast of the patron saint of Ragusa):

> Year of the Lord 1190, in the month of February on St Blaise's day [. . .] Gervasio the count. A court having been summoned with the bell, at the wish [. . .] of the judges, nobles and the whole people, with the agreement of Archbishop Bernard, he [the count] makes an announcement, saying that on the Feast of St Blaise, should any foreigner, debtor, enemy and [. . .] such that he is a malefactor, come to Ragusa, he may remain free and immune three days before the Feast, and in perpetuity after it . . .[53]

Written on the same piece of parchment is another document of the same day that indicates who some of these malefactors were. This document is a treaty between Ragusa and the Cazichi, local pirates, in which the Cazichi promise not to molest Ragusan shipping.[54] They had, indeed, been interfering with the important traffic between Ragusa and Apulia: 'et si naves de apulja ragusium venerint, a Malonto usque ad Uratenic salve fiant.' On behalf of Ragusa, the document was witnessed by 'first, count Gervasio, saving the oath of [i.e., to] his lord', and then by a series of *iudices* and others, all with Slav names. A third text made that day is a copy of an older agreement, of October 1188,[55] between the men of Ragusa and the men of Rovigno; it mentions no Ragusan officials, but then the text is a copy of a document sent from Rovigno to Ragusa, and not a formal treaty between consenting parties.

Was Gervasio Slav or Latin, Dalmatian or Italian? In 1236 the Ragusans recognized Giacomo Tiepolo, Doge of Venice, as their lord; and among the names of the 'iurati iudices Ragusii civitatis' appears one 'Martinusius Gervasii quondam comitis', who would be the son of King William's count.[56] Moreover, Ivan Gondola states that when in 1192 the Ragusans abandoned the Sicilian king for Isaac Angelos, the count of Ragusa swore to observe the new suzerain; and Gondola calls him 'Goislavo, son of Crossio, from whom

[52] Ivan Marino de Gondola, paraphrase of Isaac's lost chrysobull of 1192, cited by Smičiklas, II, p. 256. Gondola died in 1650; he was Restić's source (Restić, pp. 65–6).
[53] Ljubić, p. 14; Kukuljević, II, p. 155; Radonić, p. 12; Smičiklas, II, p. 242.
[54] Kukuljević, II, p. 156; Ljubić, p. 14; Radonić, p. 11; Smičiklas, II, pp. 241–2.
[55] Kukuljević, II, p. 149; Ljubić, p. 14; Radonić, pp. 10–11; Smičiklas, II, p. 231.
[56] Ljubić, p. 53.

the noble family of Croce took their name'.[57] Is Goislav Gervasio? In other words, is 'Gervasius' Goislav latinized, or 'Goislav', Gervasius slavicized? The next count known by name is the native Dobrolo, mentioned in the Monopoli treaty of 1201; and so there is no special reason to think that the counts were drawn from outside Ragusa. Gervasio appears to have been a Ragusan vassal of King William, certainly; but not a south Italian.

The archbishop too played a major role in city government. In June 1190 'Gervasius cum nobilibus suis' and 'comes Miroslavus cum nobilibus suis' agreed on a treaty of peace between Ragusa and the Serbian county of Chulm.[58] The document was drawn up 'plena in curia Raguseorum, residente Bernardo archiepiscopo et Gervasio comite, cum nobilibus et populo cuncto, iussione cunctorum'. Similarly, the archbishop appears in due size in the friendly message sent by the commune of Ravenna to Ragusa in 1188 (dated 21 November); the Ravenna letter is addressed to 'H. [correctly B.] archiepiscopo et nobilisimo viro Ger. comiti'.[59] The identity of the Ragusan archbishops is hard to grasp. Given the close ecclesiastical and cultural links between Ragusa and southern Italy, some may have been Italians. A document of 1199 surviving in the Dubrovnik Historical Archive sheds useful light on this connection. Dated in the second year of 'our lord the king Frederick, the magnificent king of Sicily', this charter shows Bernardo, *protomagister* of the church in Trani, moving to a similar office in Ragusa. The document was apparently drawn up in Trani, not Ragusa, so its mention of King Frederick may be of no political significance in a Ragusan context.[60] Other, wider links between Dalmatia and southern Italy in this sphere are well known.[61]

A third figure at the Ragusan curia was Tasiligardus, the king's *camerarius*, encountered in the two surviving copies of the 1186 treaty.[62] He is, in fact, clearest cut of all. He was a member of an Apulian family of royal officials and businessmen, a member of

[57] Smičiklas, II, p. 257, citing Gondola; cf. Restić, p. 66. Clearly it did not occur to Restić that Goislav and Gervasio might be identical; he refers to the latter several times, extracting his name from known documents—the Ravenna pact (ibid., p. 63), the Serbian treaties (ibid., pp. 61, 63–4), and from an act of submission to Archbishop Bernard by another Dalmatian bishop 'in presenza di Gervasio conte e sui giudici Slabba, Darismiro, Mihaccio, Lucaro e di Padiseo abbate' (ibid., p. 65).

[58] Kukuljević, II, pp. 157–9; Ljubić, pp. 14–15; Radonić, p. 11; Smičiklas, II, pp. 245–7. The witnesses include the officials named in note 57.

[59] Kukuljević, II, p. 233; Smičiklas, II, pp. 231–2; unfortunately missed by Radonić.

[60] This is published, full of errors, by Smičiklas, II, pp. 320–1, who read *cunctis tam* for *civitatis Trani* and *comiti* for *civitatis* (thereby inventing a Count Simon, son of Lamprigius Ursus). Original in Historički Arhiv, Dubrovnik, ASMM.

[61] For the archbishops of Ragusa at the end of the twelfth and beginning of the thirteenth century, see D. Farlatus, *Illyricum Sacrum*, Venice, 1751–1819, VI, pp. 83–90. For cultural ties between Dalmatia and southern Italy, see E. A. Loew, *The Beneventan Script, a History of the South Italian Miniscule*, Oxford, 1924, pp. 60–5.

[62] See note 50.

which held the office of *camerarius* at the same period;[63] indeed, there is no evidence that he was other than a Bari *camerarius* on tour of duty. Thus he does not reappear in subsequent charters dating from the period of Norman domination at Ragusa. Ragusa was part of his circuit, and as direct link between the commune and its count on the one hand and the Norman government in Apulia on the other, he preceded Gervasio in the list of those present at the issue of the Serbian treaty. Unfortunately, the exact functions of the Norman *camerarius* are disputed, and it is not clear whether his work in William II's *Regno* was confined to the affairs of the royal demesne lands, or whether he was a judicial figure with wide competence over feudal relations.[64] The latter seems more likely, especially in the light of his appearance in Ragusa. Since Ragusa now owed allegiance to King William, its external relations with Stefan Nemanja became a valid concern of the king's officers. And indeed Serbian hostility to Constantinople provided an added inducement for a Norman presence at the treaty-making, a mere year after the Norman invasion of the Byzantine empire.

All these documents, except both copies of the 1186 act (and the letter from Ravenna, of course) are from the pen of Marinus, or Marinus de Camas, 'notary of the commune'. Other elements present at the *curia* are more elusive: the nobles and the *populus* cannot be identified in depth. The nobility included people with mercantile interests, as did the patriciate of Genoa and the Italian towns in general. In 1189 a noble Slav lady offered to loan the commune of Ragusa two ships that belonged to her, and, 'campana sonendo, curiam facientes, ligna receperunt'.[65] Interestingly, the loan was made against a proposed indemnity of a hundred hyperpers, the currency of the old master, Byzantium, and not of Sicily or of the Rialto. Royal authority did not bring any tendency to think in terms of royal money, the tari, even though Sicilian cash must have jostled Greek in the markets of Dalmatia. Similarly, Bernardo the *protomagister* is to be paid for his services in Byzantine hyperpers,[66] though here the penalty for breach of the contract is expressed as ten gold *solidi* of the king, a notional currency, but one that does refer to King Frederick of Sicily. But then this document was apparently

[63] F. Carabellese, *Il Comune pugliese durante la monarchia normanno-sveva*, Bari, 1924, p. 74; *Codice diplomatico barese*, I, p. 128. See note 64 below.

[64] M. Caravale, *Il Regno normanno di Sicilia*, Milan, 1966, pp. 250–4, 275–283; E. M. Jamison, 'The Norman Administration of Apulia and Capua' (*Papers of the British School at Rome*, VI, London, 1913, pp. 383–408). Miss Jamison remarks (p. 388) that after 1164 'no other chamberlain in the land of Bari has come down to us till Tasselgard late in the reign of William II'; this Tassiligardus is documented from 1177 and must be presumed identical to the figure of 1186, whose activities at Ragusa were apparently unknown to Miss Jamison.

[65] Radonić, pp. 9–10.

[66] Charter cited in note 60.

drawn up in Trani, and more striking than the Sicilian king's gold is the mention of the Greek emperor's, as a matter of course.

The treaty of 1190 with Chulm indicates that Ragusa as a whole continued to acknowledge Sicilian overlordhip. Ragusa is stated to act 'salvo sacramento domini nostri regis Tancredi, et iuramento pacis defendere illum ab omnibus sine fraude et malo ingenio'.[67] No royal officials, other than Gervasio, are stated to be present on this occasion. Nevertheless, the conflict within the *Regno* over Tancred's right of succession prompted the Ragusans to reconsider the value of their Sicilian bonds. Restić adds that the Ragusans had lost their trading rights in the Byzantine empire,[68] as a result of resigning East Roman citizenship, and this is very plausible. Amalfi too is often said to have suffered a century earlier because it fell under Norman rule and lost its honorary Byzantine citizenship.[69] In 1192 three Ragusan ambassadors, Dobroslav (perhaps the future Count Dobrolo), Rado and Marino (maybe the notary) were sent to Constantinople, and Ragusa agreed to renounce all agreements with Germany, Hungary, Sicily, Serbia and Venice.[70] Trade rights in 'Romania' and Bulgaria were restored, and goods confiscated by Greek officials at Durazzo and Adrianople were to be returned—proof of Ragusan activity along the Via Egnatia. Ferluga adds further complication by suggesting that Ragusa once again took Sicilian protection from 1193–1201—years during which the *Regno* could offer only spasmodic surveillance in any case.[71] But the impressive series of treaties between Dubrovnik and Fano, Ancona, Monopoli and Bari makes no mention of the Sicilian crown, only of local town officials (and even then they are ascribed no rights over Ragusa). Misreadings of Bernardo of Trani's charter may have contributed to the confusion; and the knowledge that neighbouring Cattaro remained in some way attached to the *Regno* under Constance is more genuinely perplexing.[72]

Villari stated that Norman interest in Ragusa was part of wider interest in the Byzantine empire, and that the acquisition of Dalmatian towns was a stage in the strategy that culminated in the seizure of Thessalonika in 1185.[73] This is to ignore the voluntary nature of

[67] Smičiklas, II, p. 245.

[68] Restić, p. 65: 'Non fu l'ultima la considerazione, che per l'alienazione dell'Imperio Greco avevano perso i Ragusei il commercio della Romania, da dove i loro mercanti erano stati cacciati.'

[69] See, e.g., G. Luzzatto, *Economic History of Italy to the mid-16th Century*, London, 1961, p. 51; G. Galasso, 'Il Commercio amalfitano nel periodo normanno', *Studi in onore di R. Filangieri*, I, Naples, 1959, pp. 81–103.

[70] Restić, loc. cit.; Gondola in Smičiklas, II, pp. 256–7.

[71] J. Ferluga, *Vizantijska uprava u Dalmacji*, Belgrade, 1957, pp. 149–50.

[72] See note 4.

[73] Villari, p. 49: 'The occupation of Dubrovnik by the Normans is evidently an episode in the wars which they waged against the Eastern Empire, and the town was probably seized merely as a base for further operations.'

Ragusan attachment to the *Regno*, and to exaggerate Ragusa's importance as a gateway to the Greek east. Durazzo, not Ragusa, was the triumphal arch of the Normans, giving access to the Via Egnatia, used by Amalfitans and Ragusans alike, stormed by Guiscard's Normans as well as King William's. The adhesion of Ragusa to the *Regno* belongs rather to the history of Venetian relations with the Adriatic towns—relations which the Ragusans appear to have handled with great adroitness. Vassal of Venice's Sicilian friend, and then, as Venetian relations with Sicily deteriorated, a beneficiary of royal protection, Ragusa suffered little from its changes of master. In February 1187 Venice successfully negotiated a new military and commercial alliance with the Basileus, expressly without prejudice to past agreements with the king of Sicily (unless he were to attack Byzantium again).[74] As Byzantium and Venice underwent temporary reconciliation, the balance shifted again, and Ragusa could remain thankful for Sicilian overlordship so long as the *Regno* eschewed aggression against the Greeks and remained whole in body.

The history of Ragusa at the end of the twelfth century brings together the commercial aspirations of the town and the struggle to reconcile its own welfare with larger events in the Adriatic. Without pretensions to independence, Ragusa nevertheless accepted its lords often by deliberate choice. The masters the Ragusans had were, by and large, the masters they wanted.

Calendar of Documents from the Norman period

i.	1186, September 27.	Treaty with Nemanja and his brother Miroslav.
ii.	1188 [see below].	Treaty with Rovigno: known from copy of 1190.
iii.	1188, November 21.	Pact with Ravenna.
iv.	1189, August 20.	Countess Desislava makes two ships available to Ragusa.
v.	1190, February 3.	Decree relating to the immunity of foreign visitors.
vi.	1190, February 3.	Peace with the Cazichi.
vii.	1190, February 3.	Treaty with Rovigno: copy.
viii.	1190, June 7.	Miroslav of Chulm makes peace with Ragusa.

[74] Tafel and Thomas, op. cit., I, pp. 179–203; Brand, op. cit., pp. 197–8.